



# Yes Youth Can!



USAID/Kenya - Joan Lewa

*Yes Youth Can!*

**YES YOUTH CAN!** is a nationwide program designed to empower Kenyan youth to achieve a greater voice in national policy making and create new livelihood opportunities. Yes Youth Can! (YYC) is USAID's largest youth-empowerment program in the world.

## **Yes Youth Can! Accomplishments**

Yes Youth Can! was developed based on significant research conducted by youth themselves throughout the country. A key finding was that youth had little confidence in all of the institutions intermediating resources on their behalf. This included public sector institutions, private sector business and civil society organizations. Youth also expressed the desire to have their own voice in affairs that affect them through youth-run organizations.

USAID's immediate response to these results was to support 15 quick-impact projects to promote youth voices on national issues, particularly the reform process, through independent grassroots organizations and activities.

In 2011, USAID has been supporting youth to build new, more representative networks to encourage collaboration among youth and leverage resources. More than 500,000 youth from thousands of villages are *Youth Bunge* (Youth Parliament) members. So far, over 400 *Youth Bunges* have registered as self-help groups with the Ministry of Gender & Social Development. *Bunge's* serve as a youth-owned, youth-led and youth managed space for youth to develop new leadership skills, promote transparent decision-making about their priorities and engage their collective voice on decisions that affect them.

### **Youth Facts in Kenya:**

- Kenya defines youth as 18-35 years old
- 36% of Kenya's population are youth
- 45% of Nairobi's population are youth
- One-third of all HIV/AIDS patients are youth and 75% of new infections occur among youth
- Over 80% of Kenyan youth are literate
- nearly 2.5 million youth are unemployed and barely 125,000 are absorbed annually into formal employment

- *Youth Bunges* are all inclusive of youth, male and female, ages 18-35.
- *Youth Bunges* are the counterpart organizations for YYC implementing partners – together they will improve the enabling environment for youth enterprises and organizations and build new skills in youth leadership and entrepreneurship.
- *Youth Bunges* will empower youth to directly elect their own leaders – at village, county and national levels - and build an agenda for action in their communities.
- *Youth Bunges* motivate youth to take action and improve their communities with the resources they have and use their assets as leverage to build new partnerships with donors and government agencies.



*Youth Bunge in session for asset mapping with community leaders.*

- *Youth Bunges* put youth in the driver's seat, create spaces for learning by doing, and allow for active youth engagement in program decisions.

### **Yes Youth Can! Planned Activities**

- In October 2011, YYC will launch a new social

networking platform to connect youth throughout the country. USAID is currently negotiating the technical design with telecommunications service providers.

- In November 2011, YYC will constitute a Kenya Youth Think Tank to conduct research and analyze national policies from the lens of youth-friendliness, international best practice and how policies improve youth access to economic opportunities.
- In January 2012, YYC will formally launch a youth-managed **Youth Innovate for Change Fund** to support grassroots community development and empowerment projects implemented by youth and youth-serving organizations. By incorporating youth into the management of the fund **Yes Youth Can!** will promote transparency and accountability, and further youth's leadership development.

### **Yes Youth Can! Partners**

Yes Youth Can! is generating these new platforms for peaceful change with the support of implementing partners who were selected through a national, open, and competitive process. Many of these implementers are also providing additional resources of their own to empower youth in Kenya to shape the future.

### **The implementers include:**

YYC / Coast:	CLUSA International
YYC / Central:	Mercy Corps
YYC / Nairobi:	Inuka Kenya Trust
YYC / Nyanza:	World Vision
YYC / Rift Valley:	Mercy Corps
YYC / Western:	Winrock International
YYC / National:	Mercy Corps

#### **Contact Information**

Erna Kerst	Roger Steinkamp
Mission	Youth Education
Director	Advisor

USAID/Kenya  
P.O. Box 629  
00621, Nairobi  
Kenya: Tel: 254-20-862-2000

**For more information:**  
contact USAID/Kenya's Yes  
Youth Can! team at  
[yesyouthcan@usaid.gov](mailto:yesyouthcan@usaid.gov)